

STREAM MITIGATION BANKING INITIATIVE

The KYTC has previously had a great deal of success with its wetland mitigation banking. This program allows the agency to develop or restore large wetland areas that are not directly associated with or impacted by KYTC projects. This approach is often preferred to the "postage stamp" approach of mitigating small wetland impacts at the project location. It affords the opportunity to develop or restore large ecosystems as opposed to small isolated wetland sites. In addition, the approach benefits KYTC by allowing for mitigation development in advance of the actual impacts, thus streamlining the permitting and approval processes.

Using this same philosophy, the KYTC has initiated a stream mitigation banking program. Highway construction projects sometimes result in the loss of short segments stream channel, either where culverts are constructed at road crossings or streams are diverted to address highway drainage issues. Like with wetland banking, stream banking will allow the KYTC to restore significant lengths of degraded stream and use these improvements to offset future isolated stream losses. This will reduce required permitting efforts for individual projects and streamline approvals.

Staff have undertaken outreach efforts working in concert with the Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Cabinet, U.S. Forest Service, Conservation Districts and other agencies to identify streams across the state for which restoration or stabilization is desirable. KYTC has developed a tri-fold brochure that has been distributed statewide through local Department of Agriculture offices and other related local agencies. The program has been met with overwhelmingly positive response. Through June 2003, approximately 47,000 feet of viable stream restoration projects have been identified. These are currently being evaluated and prioritized for possible restoration and use as mitigation for future highway related stream losses.